

## Taking Action To Get What You Want From Life

from the American Counseling Association

Most of us have times when we realize our lives aren't turning out the way we once dreamed. We may feel "stuck," or resigned to our current situation, surrendering our optimistic visions to the realities of our lives.

But rather than complaining about what hasn't worked out, a more positive approach is to take action to get closer to the goals you'd like for your life. There's no magic formula to achieving your desires, but you can start working toward the life you'd like with small, doable steps.

A vital starting point is to stop blaming others, harboring anger or feeling helpless over things that haven't worked out. You need to begin taking responsibility for your own behaviors, finances, work, health and relationships. When you do so, your life will begin to reflect who you are and what you value.

Often, past relationships, whether romantic, family or work-related, leave us unsure of ourselves or reluctant to express our feelings. Learning to voice your preferences, both positive and negative, can help move you toward honest living and loving. It's not about being bossy or always getting your own way, but rather about being honest and understood.

Forget myths about "perfect" romances, friendships and jobs. We're all human and there will always be some problems in our paths. Being honest with yourself regarding these relationships makes it easier to honestly evaluate their impact on your life.

A big step forward is to identify your personal strengths and interests, and then put time into nourishing them. Instead of being someone you're not, work at enhancing the real you. Find time for friends, sports, hobbies or other interests that satisfy you.

You should also learn to say "no" sometimes. It doesn't mean being selfish, but rather avoiding the resentment and anger that comes with agreeing to things you really don't want to do.

Move toward what you really want, even if in small steps. Maybe it's just one daily action that gets you closer to your desires: make that first phone call, rewrite your resume, organize those closets or files. We may know the result we desire, but often fail to take the first step toward achieving it.

If you find it difficult to change a life that isn't making you happy, consider consulting a professional counselor who can help you move in more positive directions.

*"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACAcornet@counseling.org](mailto:ACAcornet@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)*

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